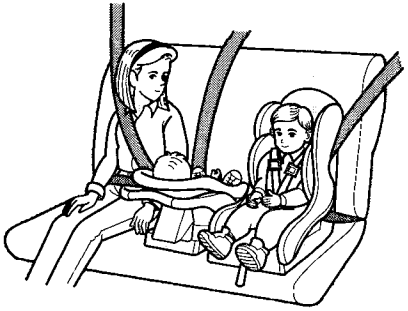

Children depend on adults to protect them. However, despite their best intentions, many parents and other adults may not know how to *properly* protect young passengers.

So if you have children, or if you ever need to drive with a grandchild or other children in your car, be sure to read this section.

⚠ WARNING

Children who are unrestrained or improperly restrained can be seriously injured or killed in a crash.

Any child too small for a seat belt should be properly restrained in a child seat. A larger child should be properly restrained with a seat belt.

All Children Must Be Restrained

Each year, many children are injured or killed in vehicle crashes because they are either unrestrained or not properly restrained. In fact, vehicle accidents are the number one cause of death of children ages 12 and under.

To reduce the number of child deaths and injuries, every state and Canadian province requires that infants and children be restrained whenever they ride in a vehicle.

Any child who is too small to wear a seat belt should be properly restrained in a child seat. (See page 23.)

A larger child should always be restrained with a seat belt. (See page 34.)

Protecting Children

Children Should Sit in the Back Seat

According to accident statistics, children of all ages and sizes are safer when they are restrained in the back seat, not the front seat. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Transport Canada recommend that all children ages 12 and under be properly restrained in the back seat.

In the back seat, children are less likely to be injured by striking hard interior parts during a collision or hard braking. Also, children cannot be injured by an inflating airbag when they ride in the back.

The Passenger's Airbag Poses Serious Risks to Children

Airbags have been designed to help protect adults in a moderate to severe frontal collision. To do this, the passenger's airbag is quite large, and it inflates with tremendous speed.

Infants

Never put a rear-facing child seat in the front seat of a vehicle equipped with a passenger's airbag. If the airbag inflates, it can hit the back of the child seat with enough force to kill or very seriously injure an infant.

Small Children

Placing a forward-facing child seat in the front seat of a vehicle equipped with a passenger's airbag can be hazardous. If the vehicle seat is too far forward, or the child's head is thrown forward during a collision, an inflating airbag can strike the child with enough force to kill or very seriously injure a small child.

Larger Children

Children who have outgrown child seats are also at risk of being injured or killed by an inflating passenger's airbag. Whenever possible, larger children should sit in the back seat, properly restrained with a seat belt. (See page 34 for important information about protecting larger children.)